

BUS BUZZ

MARCH 2008

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Safety Busing Due March 31.** Only one school week left.
- **Reimbursement Workshops scheduled.** See page 2 for details.
- **Honorable Mention:** Concerned Citizens, Linda Rasmussen and Erica Morris of Bonneville School District. See page 7 for details.

WINTER IN WALLACE

And you thought you had a rough winter!

You (Transportation Supervisor Kirby Krulitz) of the Wallace School District go to work on Thursday. You hear some ominous creaking, groaning and cracking throughout the day (and its not coming from the drivers). You tell the boss (Superintendent Bob Rannells) it may not be safe to be in your building. You go home for the day, and when you come back to work the next morning and open the door, this is what you see. Go to picture 1 on page 2.

The back half of your transportation building lying on top six of your buses. How do you tell the boss (Superintendent Rannells) you can't have school for a while because $\frac{3}{4}$ of your bus fleet is buried under what used to be your bus garage and a whole lot of snow. By the way, you can't call him because your phone is in your office buried in the rubble.

When you do reach him, he

says school must go on and it's a time for action. You get together, call your neighboring districts and borrow enough buses from Kellogg, Coeur d'Alene, and Post Falls to make sure you can get your students to school.

Now its time to see what can be salvaged from the garage and try to keep the rest of the building from collapsing. You are able to drive two of the buses parked in the front of the building out with no damage to the buses, but what about the six buried under the rubble?

What you need is a (brave?) individual who is willing to try and drive the remaining six buses out of the garage without the remainder of the building falling in on them. Who should volunteer? None other than the boss himself (Superintendent Rannells). First, he drives the two outside buses out of the building with little damage to the buses or himself. Next, they hook on to each of the remain-

ing four buses with a cable extended from a truck to hold the front end of the buses on the ground while the boss tries to drive them out from under the rubble. Believe it or not, he succeeds in retrieving all six buses and with a little more luck all but three should be repairable.

A week passes with more and more snow falling. The National Guard is called out to help shovel the snow from endangered roofs, including yours, so you can finally get in to re-claim what is left of your shop and equipment. One more day and the snow will all be off the remaining portion of the garage. It's morning on the last day of shoveling, the workers are preparing to climb on to the roof when someone hears a loud cracking noise and everyone clears away from the building. A few seconds later, there is no longer a need for the shovels as this is what they see.

-Continued on page 2

FUNDING CAP WAIVERS

The preliminary FY2007 Funding Cap Model reports 15 school districts and three charter schools that are capped. SDE has received funding cap appeal applications requesting waivers from the funding cap. Appeal applications will be presented at the State Board

of Education's June 2008 meeting. SDE has been visiting capped school districts to verify eligibility of hardship bus runs. In accordance with Idaho Code 33-1006 (5), districts that have qualifying hardship bus runs may be granted a waiver up to the percent of hardship bus

runs. For example, if a district or charter school has 10 routes and is granted a waiver for one hardship route, they may be granted up to a 113% cap instead of a 103% cap for that year's reimbursement.

TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT WORKSHOP

The State Department of Education will be holding four regional Transportation Reimbursement Workshops throughout the state. All workshops will be one full day from 8 a.m.—5 p.m., with the first hour specific to charter schools and the second hour specific to contracted busing. The remainder of the day will review new reimbursement changes and a line-by-line training on completing the Transportation Reimburse-

ment Claim Form.

The workshops are scheduled as follows:

Boise on Monday, May 5

Blackfoot on Wednesday, May 7

Jerome on Thursday, May 8

Moscow on Tuesday, May 13

Online registration is available at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/Transportation/default.asp>. More infor-

mation about each training's location and an agenda will be provided at the end of the registration process. There is no fee for these workshops; however, we do need an accurate count of attendees for location and materials. A separate online registration form is needed for each person attending.

—Lanette Daw

WORKSHOP AGENDA

8-9 am: Charter School Start-Up and Continued Advance Payments

9-9:45 am: Contracted Busing

10-11:45 am: New Information and Changes in Transportation Reimbursement

1-5 pm: Detailed overview of transportation reimbursement. A line by line training on completing the Reimbursement Claim Form.

BASIC BUS

At last, the conventional and transit FE basic buses are done and on their way to the dealers for bidding. Our intent is to have the bids returned by March 30 and to open them on March 31. We will use the bids to set our maximum allowable depreciation amounts for the current

school year. This new way of setting our maximum allowable depreciation amount should put an end to what happened last year when the price of buses increased so drastically. Now instead of having to wait for the average price of buses to increase to meet such

drastic increases, we will go for bid twice each year in an effort to keep up with school bus costs. We will let everyone know what the new depreciation levels are as soon as we have them.

—Ray Merical



Wallace Bus Garage, picture 1.

WINTER IN WALLACE (CONT. FROM COVER)

The good news is, the county has allowed the district to use a vacant maintenance facility until further notice. They have borrowed buses to get their kids to school, and SDE has given them surplus computers, monitors, a copier/printer and a fax

machine for their use. Most importantly, no one was injured. They are still waiting for word from their insurance company and at last word, they still had not been able to reach their buried office, parts room or tools. I think we should all count our

blessings and wish the best for the Wallace School District and its transportation department.

—Ray Merical



Wallace Bus Garage, picture 2.

WHAT'S NEW IN STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Percentage of Students Riding the School Bus Report

This report tells each district what percentage of students enrolled are riding the school bus to and from school. It lists all three ridership counts for the FY, the highest of the three (Amt for 07 Claim), the highest count for the previous year (FY06 Riders), the Total Enrolled (from IBEDS October 1 Report), and the Percentage of Riders. The Percentage of Riders is the Amt for 07 Claim divided by the Total Enrolled. This report is located on [Transportation's Home Page](#).

Field Trip Tracking Determination

In an effort to be proactive, SDE Student Transportation has created a user-friendly method for districts to determine if field trips are reimbursable or non-reimbursable. This resource is located on [Transportation's Home Page](#).

SISTR News: System for Idaho School Transportation Reporting:

The Funding Cap Appeal, Pre-Approval Purchase Request, and Accident Reports (long and short) are now being

submitted to SDE Student Transportation online. Hard copies of these reports are no longer being accepted. To submit any of the above reports, login to [SISTR](#), answer the questions and click submit. Any reports submitted via SISTR are always available to the districts under the [View all Submitted Reports & Requests](#) link.

When an Annual report is submitted, a check mark will appear next to the report on the main page. This tells the districts which reports SDE has received for the current Fiscal Year.

-Amanda Salazar

PERSPECTIVE

To and From School on a Big Yellow Bus

I was driving on a country road last week on my way to somewhere at just past four o'clock in the afternoon. We came to a point in the road where a big yellow school bus was stopped. It was heading in the opposite direction, but its red lights were flashing to insure that traffic in both directions would stop.

We were the second car in the lane so we could clearly see the driver and the young riders as they exited the bus. Not usually a big deal. One of those typical sites you see every day in rural America. What happened next was a reminder of my own youth and the relationships that were formed, some good and some bad, with both the kids on the bus and with the driver who daily shuttled us

quiet, noisy or otherwise to and from school.

As several of the young girls came to the stairway to exit the bus, they stopped, turned to the driver, and gave her a big hug, apparently saying goodbye. It was first a shock and then at once a pleasure to see these young girls and their female driver showing by their actions how much each of them cared for one another.

While physical contact with children in the school systems of America has now become more and more taboo, I wonder what price has been paid for the change in procedure and policy so as to prevent the expressing of appreciation, love and respect that was evident the other afternoon on a rural roadside in California of all places.

What that encounter with the yellow school bus last week brought back to me was my own memories of those rides to and from school, day in and day out, year after year. My first thought was of Betty Matthews. She was our bus driver for as long as I can remember. She had a southern accent, or Okalahoma accent or something like that.

She was great at her job and was never late. We lived up on a hill and would run down the driveway as we saw her bus approaching. There was no hugging for sure, but I later found out that her stern nature was to keep us in line. In fact, we were later surprised at how really nice she was when she wasn't driving the bus. She was the mother of my sister Jacque's best friend Donna. – Cont. on pg 7



DANGEROUS RAILROAD CROSSINGS

Take a close look at this picture, and what do you see wrong? No, it is not the bus; it is the train cars. We came across this railroad crossing during a spot inspection at a district. This is a double-track crossing, and the bus is getting ready to cross the track that has a long line of train cars parked on both sides. I wonder what is coming on the second set of tracks? Well, how will we see? Yes, the bus has to nose

out onto the second track in hopes that there is not a train coming on the second track. Would you like to drive or ride in this bus? No thanks!

Those train cars were parked on this track for over 24 hours, wherein, a whole fleet of buses had to cross the tracks multiple times. Do you have any railroad crossing circumstances in your district that cause this

kind of danger and frustration? If so, take a picture and send it to Ray Merical, Director, with the railroad crossing identification (ID) number. The ID number is on a metal plate on one of the railroad crossing signs. The pictures and any details will be forwarded to Operation Lifesaver. We can not guarantee any sure fixes, but more awareness is always a positive thing!



Moscow SD #281

Dick Krasselt has retired and will be replaced by Greg Harris who is currently the district's lead technician and driver trainer. Dick and Greg have both been with the district transportation program since the late 1980s and both worked their way up to the Transportation Supervisor position. We do not know as yet who will be replacing Greg as technician.

SAFETY BUSING

Consideration for reimbursement will be contingent on the application for "Request for Safety Busing Reimbursement" being received by the State Department of Education Transportation Section on or before March 31 of the school year in which the safety busing began. If a district was to not address safety busing, (not apply for reimbursement request) then those students would be ineligible riders and therefore can not be counted.

Definitions:

School year safety busing began: Should be the same year as the year you are filling for. This year should read

FY 2007/08.

LEA Board of trustees' approval date: The most current year the local board approved your safety busing.

Description: Should include the boundary (North, South, East, and/or West) and the school it supports.

Submit this report electronically no later than March 31, 2008 to the State Department of Education by logging into SISTR at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/Transportation/SISTR/default.asp>. Hard copies of these reports are no longer being accepted. The only exceptions are the hard cop-

ies already received. If you are unsure if SDE has received your report, in SISTR click the "View all Submitted Reports & Requests" link. This area will tell you if SDE has received this report and the status of it. Also, when an Annual report is submitted, a check mark will appear next to the report on the main page. It is recommended that any district that sent in a hard copy login in and verify that the requests are under your district. If you have any questions please contact Amanda via e-mail at adsalazar@sde.idaho.gov or via phone at (208) 332-6851.

File for Safety Busing online via SISTR.

Safety Busing due by March 31, 2008. Only one school week left!

POTENTIAL BUS DEPRECIATION CHANGE

SDE has been working with districts to determine a bus depreciation method that will depreciate buses according to bus use and mileage. There are some school districts in the state that wear out buses prior to the 12-year life expectancy by the pure fact that they travel several miles a day or due to conditions of the roads traveled.

SDE has developed a method to accelerate bus depreciation based on the type of use and mileage of a bus. The intent is for dis-

tricts to have a depreciation option that will meet special use and mileage circumstances. The current 12-year depreciation method will remain and may continue to be the best fit for most districts. Districts that would like to place a new bus on the 'mileage' option will designate that method during the first year of bus depreciation. Districts will assign a type of use category and mileage to the bus each year for annually calculating depreciation.

A sample of the type of use and mileage depreciation calculation is available online at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/Transportation/default.asp>. The earliest that the new depreciation method would go into place is most likely FY2010. Please contact Lanette Daw, Financial Specialist, with any questions or concerns.

-Lanette Daw



SEATBELT CUTTERS

SISBO – 2002, all buses shall be equipped with a seat belt cutting device secured in a location that is easily accessible to the driver while properly belted. Most devices provided by manufacturers to this point were gripped through a single finger hole in the handle of the device and attached to the vehicle wall with Velcro.

SISBO – 2007, each bus shall be equipped with a durable webbing cutter having a full width handgrip and a protected, replaceable or non-corrodible blade. The required belt cutter shall be mounted in a location acces-

sible to the seated driver in an easily detachable manner.

This device and its proper use were covered during the 2007 Train the Trainer workshop.

As spot inspections are performed, we continue to see this as an area needing improvement. We continually encounter seat belt cutters that are mounted out of the drivers reach while in the belted position.

Drivers hold the first step in responsibility of noting if this device is not properly mounted and easily accessi-

ble as required in the driver's pre-trip inspection.

As some of these devices are made of plastic, over time their integrity can be compromised. The Velcro that attaches the device can also lose much its holding power. We are unaware of any required testing procedures for the use or attachment of the devices, but there is a possibility of adding them to a replacement schedule every so many years. If you find one broken or damaged, replace it with the full handgrip style device.

-Virginia Overland

As spot inspections are performed, we continue to see this as an area needing improvement. We continually encounter cutters that are mounted out of the drivers reach while in the belted position.

IAPT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

IAPT Annual Conference will be held June 23– 26, 2008. The conference will begin on Monday with the School Bus Safety Competition, Picnic Dinner and Safety Competition Awards at the Boise School District Transportation Facility. All events on Tuesday will be held at the Barber Park Education and Event Center. Supt. Tom Luna will

present the Opening Remarks on Tuesday. Breakout Sessions will be at the Best Western Vista Inn Conference Center and the Vendor show will be at Barber Park Education and Event Center on Wednesday, June 25. A shuttle will be available hourly beginning at 10:15 am. On Thursday, all events will be held at the Best Western

Vista Inn Conference Center. For a registration form and information, an agenda, and hotel information log on to the Transportation Web site at www.sde.idaho.gov/transportation/iapt.asp.

-Rick Vertrees

Mark your
calendars:

IAPT Annual
Conference is
June 23-26th.

TRANSPORTING AMERICA'S MOST PRECIOUS CARGO

We at (SDE) would like to thank each and every one of you for doing a great job.

As the years go by and we continue doing the same job day after day, we all have a tendency to get more and more complacent in what we do. We know our jobs, we know our passengers, and we know their habits. As we visit districts throughout the state, we see the same things in district after district. The improper loading and unloading of students is one of the most common discrepancies we find while riding routes. Some districts are better than others in their loading/unloading procedures, but there are few that are perfect or couldn't do better. It's not our job to point fingers at anyone, but we do want to remind everyone to do their best to not become too complacent in their day-to-day routine and jobs. We all know how hard it can be to work with middle school students, but whatever you do, don't just give up on them. **They** are not invincible, and they can grow into responsible adults if we help.

As a reminder, below are the procedures for the loading and unloading of students, please take a few minutes to read through them and share them with your co-workers.

The following procedures are required when stopping on the roadway to load passengers:

- a. Activate amber warning lights at least 200 feet (or 8 - 10 seconds) before stopping.
- b. Stop in center of lane, at least ten (10) feet before students on right side of road and least ten (10) feet before students on left side of road.
- c. With foot on brake, place standard transmissions in neutral.
- d. Count students and note position.
- e. Check mirrors and traffic. Make sure all traffic has stopped.
- f. Open service door to activate red overhead lights and extend stop arm.
- g. Signal students to enter bus from right, and to cross from left side of road. Students

warn students of any danger!

- h. Recount students as they enter bus.
- i. Recheck mirrors and traffic.
- j. Make sure students are seated.
- k. Close door deactivating 8 light system and retract stop arm.
- l. Put bus in gear.
- m. Check traffic and all mirrors.
- n. Proceed on route.

Stopping to Unload Passengers. It is important to teach students not to get out of their seat until the bus has come to a complete stop and the driver has opened the entrance door. The following procedures are required whenever stopping on the roadway to unload passengers:

- a. Activate amber warning lights at least 200 feet (or 8-10 seconds) before stopping.
- b. Stop in center of lane.
- c. With foot on brake, place transmission in neutral.
- d. Students shall remain seated until bus comes to complete stop and the driver opens the entrance door.

e. Check mirrors and traffic. Make sure all traffic is slowing to stop.

f. Open service door to activate red overhead lights and extend stop arm.

g. As students exit bus, if they must cross road they should walk ten (10) feet in front of bus along the shoulder of road, and wait for prearranged signal from driver before crossing. At no time shall students cross behind bus! Use long steady blast of horn to warn students of any danger!

h. Count students as they exit bus.

i. Recheck mirrors and traffic.

j. A count shall be made of all students going in all directions. Account for the whereabouts of all students before moving the bus.

k. Close door deactivating 8 light system and retract stop arm.

- l. Put bus in gear.
- m. Check traffic and all mirrors.
- n. Proceed on route.

Feel free to make copies of these procedures and hand them out to your drivers just to refresh their memories.



shall approach bus in single file to load bus. Use long steady blast of horn to

PERSPECTIVE (CONT. FROM PG 3.)

We knew everyone on our bus. We didn't pick up Donna until almost the last stop of the morning. By then Mrs. Matthews had gathered in the Vander Maydens, the Cartwright's, the Gassaway's, the Veache's, the Villelobos's, the Van Zants and on and on we went until each stop was made.

We lived in the country and her route included some narrow foothill roads. A certain level of skill was surely required to get that long bus around those narrow turns. Snow was even a factor on some mornings, not to mention a load of noisy kids.

When I was in Junior High, I would sit in the front and would watch Mrs. Matthews maneuver the bus, ever mindful that if something

happened to her while we were driving that someone would need to jump in to take over at the wheel. Two hours per day was a lot of time, anything could happen. It never happened. But I knew I was ready.

I feel sorry for my city friends who walked to school or had mom and dad drop them off. The bus was another part of the whole school experience. A culture of its own, the making and keeping of relationships during an impressionable time of life, never to be forgotten.

I smiled again this morning as I thought of those several young girls giving a hug goodbye to their bus driver and remembered again of the sometimes unique and special experiences we had on

our long bus rides those many years ago. I doubt we ever thought to say thank you to Mrs. Matthews. We should have. She made a difference, and we should have said thank you.

Congratulations to that driver on a rural route in California who has such an influence for good on those young people on her bus, so as to warrant an unsolicited hug goodbye each afternoon as she makes stop after stop. Things and people are just different in rural America. I wonder if I could get my grandchildren on her bus.

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CONCERNED CITIZENS

Linda Rasmussen and Erica Morris had just started morning routes at approximately 6:45 am as a school bus driver and aide for Bonneville School District # 93 on US Highway 26 when they came



upon a crash scene. A motorist had lost control of the vehicle and been hit by an oncoming semi truck, which had ejected Stephanie Avery from her vehicle onto the roadway. As Avery lay in the

roadway, she can remember the sound of the wheels of passing motorists as they went past her, not being able to see her because it was still dark. Without hesitation, Linda

activated the school bus eight-way loading lights and stop arm to warn other traffic, while Erica rushed to provide aid and comfort to Avery until emergency personnel could arrive at the

scene. Their actions prevented Avery from being struck by other passing vehicles, thus saving her life. They were honored by Idaho State Police officer's Col. G. Jerry Russell and Lt. Col Kevin Johnson on December 21. The school district also presented them with \$50.00 gift certificates.

-Hank Povey



REGIONAL SUPERVISOR MEETINGS

Transportation Supervisor Meetings were held during the month of February. Topics that were discussed around the state are:

1. Safety Busing is due March 31, 2007. Safety busing areas need to be re-evaluated every three years.
2. Reimbursable/Non-Reimbursable Field Trips: In an effort to be proactive, SDE Student Transportation has created a user-friendly method for district to determine if field trips are reimbursable or non-reimbursable. This resource is located on [Transportation's Home Page](#).
3. Spot Inspections: If a compliance rating from a spot review is 70% or under, the district will receive a written corrective action plan

with a deadline for complying with those requirements. Districts that received a corrective action plan will be revisited.

4. Basic Bus: The Basic Bus has been developed for the purpose of setting a maximum allowable price for the depreciation schedule for districts purchasing new school buses. For more details see page 2.

5. Non-Conforming Vehicles: Mileage for these vehicles should be tracked for possible reimbursement at the end of the year. The mileage claimed at the end of the year must be supported through documentation and clearly identified as reimbursable and non-reimbursable. For more information on this contact your specialists.

6. Funding Cap Appeals:

Districts capped must now meet new requirements. See page 1 for details.

7. Number of spare buses allowed on depreciation: The maximum number of spare allowed for purposes of depreciation reimbursement will be one-tenth percent (0.001) of the districts average daily attendance (ADA) rounded up.

Technician workshops: Tentative dates for the workshop are July 14-18 in Boise. When arrangements are finalized, notices will go out to the districts.

If you would like more information on the above topics, please contact your regional Steering Committee Member.

We are on the Web!

www.sde.idaho.gov/Transportation/default.asp

Steering Committee Members

Region 1	Cliff Mooney	St. Maries (41)	(208) 245-2579	6/30/2009
Region 2	Craig Johnson	Mountain View (244)	(208) 926-4862	6/30/2009
Region 3	Tom Muir	Homedale (370)	(208) 337-3772	6/30/2009
	Steve Vis (Alt)	Middleton Bus Co.	(208) 459-0195	6/30/2010
Region 4	Rex Squires	Blaine Co. (61)	(208) 578-5420	6/30/2011
Region 5	Kevin Seamons	Preston (201)	(208) 852-0283	6/30/2008
	Brent Johns (Alt)	Soda Springs (150)	(208) 547-3959	6/30/2009
Region 6	Karen Daw	Fremont (215)	(208) 624-7542	6/30/2009
IAPT	Linda Braswell	Kuna (3)	(208) 922-1017	6/30/2009